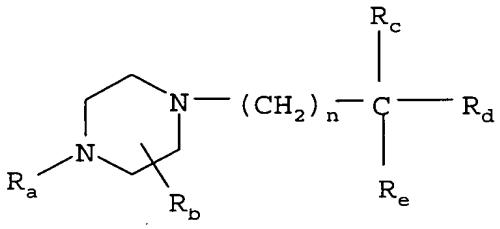
Claims 1-9 (Previously canceled)

Claim 10. (Currently amended): A compound the formula (I)



(I),

wherein

n denotes the number 3 ~~,~~ or 4 ~~or 5~~,

R_a denotes a phenyl group substituted by the groups R_1 and R_2, wherein

R_1 denotes a hydrogen, ~~fluorine,~~ chlorine or bromine atom, a C_{1-3}-alkyl , C_{1-3}-alkoxy or benzyloxy group ~~wherein the hydrogen atoms are optionally wholly or partially replaced by fluorine atoms, a hydroxy, C_{1-4}-alkoxy, phenyl-C_{1-3}-alkoxy, carboxy, C_{1-3}-alkoxycarbonyl, aminocarbonyl, C_{1-3}-alkylaminocarbonyl, N,N-di-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-aminocarbonyl, nitro, amino, C_{1-3}-alkylamino, di-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-amino, phenyl-C_{1-3}-alkyl-amino, N-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-phenyl-C_{1-3}-alkylamino, C_{1-3}-alkyl-carbonylamino, N-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-C_{1-3}-alkylcarbonylamino, C_{1-3}-alkylsulphonylamino or N-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-C_{1-3}-alkyl-sulphonylamino group~~ and

R_2 denotes a hydrogen, ~~fluorine,~~ chlorine , ~~or~~ bromine ~~atom,~~ or a C_{1-3}-alkyl group or

~~R_1 and R_2 together denote a methylenedioxy group, a heteroaryl group, a monocyclic heteroaryl or~~

~~phenyl group each of which is substituted by a phenyl or monocyclic heteroaryl group, while the abovementioned phenyl moieties are each optionally substituted by a fluorine, chlorine or bromine atom,~~
~~and the abovementioned phenyl moieties and heteroaryl groups are each optionally substituted by a C_{1-3}-alkyl group wherein the hydrogen atoms are optionally wholly or partially replaced by fluorine atoms, by a hydroxy, C_{1-3}-alkoxy, carboxy, C_{1-3}-alkoxycarbonyl, aminocarbonyl, C_{1-3}-alkylaminocarbonyl or N,N-di-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-aminocarbonyl group,~~
a biphenyl group optionally substituted by fluorine, chlorine, bromine, methyl, methoxy or trifluoreomethyl,

a pyridyl, pyrimidyl, pyrazinyl or thienyl group optionally substituted by phenyl or

a phenyl group substituted by thienyl, thiazolyl, pyrrolyl, imidazolyl, pyridyl or benzimidazolyl;

R_b denotes a hydrogen ~~atom or a C_{1-3}-alkyl group~~,

R_c denotes C_{1-3}-alkyl ~~a hydrogen atom,~~
~~a C_{1-10}-alkyl, C_{3-7}-cycloalkyl or C_{3-7}-cycloalkyl-C_{1-3}-alkyl group wherein the hydrogen atoms in each case is optionally wholly or partially replaced by fluorine atoms,~~

~~a phenyl, naphthyl or heteroaryl group optionally substituted by a fluorine, chlorine or bromine atoms, by a C_{1-3}-alkyl group wherein the hydrogen atoms is optionally wholly or partially replaced by fluorine atoms, by a hydroxy, C_{1-3}-alkoxy, carboxy, C_{1-3}-alkoxycarbonyl, aminocarbonyl, C_{1-3}-alkylaminocarbonyl or N,N-di-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-aminocarbonyl group, by a 3- to 7-membered cycloalkyleneimino group, while the methylene group in position 4 of a 6- or 7-membered cycloalkyleneimino group may additionally be replaced by an oxygen or sulphur atom, by a sulphinyl, sulphonyl, imino or N-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-imino group, by a nitro, amino, C_{1-3}-alkylamino, di-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-amino,~~

~~C_{1-3}-alkylcarbonylamino, N-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-C_{1-3}-alkylcarbonylamino, C_{1-3}-alkylsulphonylamino or N-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-C_{1-3}-alkylsulphonylamino group~~,

R_d denotes a phenyl ~~, naphthyl or heteroaryl~~ group ~~each~~ optionally substituted by a fluorine ~~, chlorine or bromine~~ atom, ~~by a C_{1-3}-alkyl group wherein the hydrogen atoms are optionally wholly or partially replaced by fluorine atoms, by a hydroxy, C_{1-3}-alkoxy, carboxy, C_{1-3}-alkoxycarbonyl, aminocarbonyl, C_{1-3}-alkylaminocarbonyl or N,N-di-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-aminocarbonyl group, by a 3- to 7-membered cycloalkyleneimino group, while the methylene group in the 4-position of a 6- or 7-membered cycloalkyleneimino group may additionally be replaced by an oxygen or sulphur atom, by a sulphinyl, sulphonyl, imino or N-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-imino group, by a nitro, amino, C_{1-3}-alkylamino, di-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-amino, C_{1-3}-alkylcarbonylamino, N-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-C_{1-3}-alkylcarbonylamino, C_{1-3}-alkylsulphonylamino or N-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-C_{1-3}-alkylsulphonylamino group,~~ and

R_e denotes ~~a carboxy group,~~ a C_{1-6}-alkoxycarbonyl or C_{3-7}-cycloalkoxycarbonyl group, wherein the carbon atom of the alkoxycarbonyl group linked to the oxygen atom is a primary or secondary carbon atom and wherein the alkyl or cycloalkyl moiety of both groups are optionally substituted ~~from~~ , except for position ~~2~~ 1 in relation to the oxygen atom , by a C_{1-3}-alkoxy, amino, C_{1-3}-alkylamino or di-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-amino group, a phenyl-C_{1-3}-alkoxycarbonyl or heteroaryl-C_{1-3}-alkoxycarbonyl group,

while the abovementioned heteroaryl groups in this claim are 6-membered heteroaryl groups having ~~containing~~ one, two or three nitrogen atoms, and 5-membered heteroaryl groups, having ~~containing~~ an imino group optionally substituted by a C_{1-3}-alkyl group, an oxygen or sulphur atom or an imino group optionally substituted by a C_{1-3}-alkyl group and an oxygen or sulphur atom or one or two nitrogen atoms,

or the ~~isomers~~ enantiomers, diastereomers or ~~and~~ the physiologically acceptable salts thereof.

Claims 11-12 (Canceled).

Claim 13. (Currently amended): A compound chosen from:

(a) methyl 2-ethyl-2-phenyl-5-[4-(4-chloro-phenyl)-piperazin-1-yl]-pentanoate,

(b) methyl 5-(4-biphenyl-4-yl-piperazin-1-yl)-2-ethyl-2-phenyl-pentanoate and

(c) methyl 5-(4-biphenyl-3-yl-piperazin-1-yl)-2-ethyl-2-phenyl-pentanoate

or the ~~isomers~~ enantiomers, diastereomers or ~~and~~ the physiologically acceptable salts thereof.

14 (Previously added). A pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 10 and one or more pharmaceutically acceptable carriers and/or diluents.

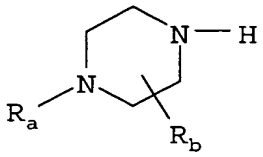
15 (Canceled).

16(Previously added). A method of treating hyperlipidaemias comprising administering to a patient in need thereof a pharmaceutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 10.

17 (Previously added). A method of treating or preventing a disorder chosen from atherosclerosis, diabetes mellitus, adiposity and pancreatitis comprising administering to a patient in need thereof a pharmaceutically effective amount of a compound according to claim 10.

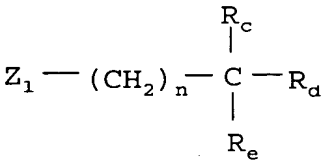
Claim 18. (Currently amended): A process for preparing a compound according to claims 10, said process comprising:

~~a)~~ reacting under suitable conditions a compound of the formula (II):



(II)

wherein R_a and R_b are defined as in claim 10, with a compound of the formula (III)

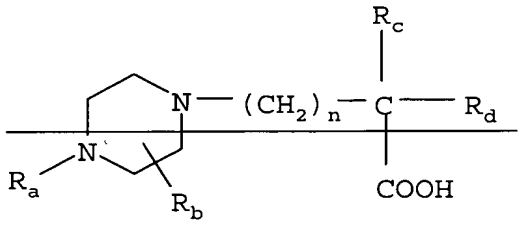


(III)

wherein n and R_c to R_e are defined as in claim ~~1~~ 10 and Z_1 denotes a nucleofugic leaving group;

~~or~~

~~b) reacting by esterification under suitable conditions a compound of formula (IV):~~



(IV)

~~wherein~~

~~n and R_a to R_d are as defined in claim 10, or the reactive derivatives thereof,~~

~~with an alcohol of the formula (V):~~

~~$H-R_e'$ (V),~~

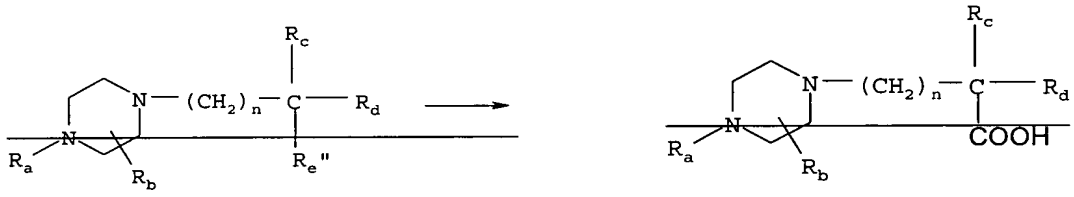
~~wherein~~

~~R_e' denotes a C_{1-6}-alkoxy or C_{3-7}-cycloalkoxy group wherein the alkyl or cycloalkyl moiety may in each case be substituted from the 2-position, relative to the oxygen atom, by a C_{1-3}-alkoxy, amino, C_{1-3}-alkylamino or di-(C_{1-3}-alkyl)-amino group, a phenyl-C_{1-3}-alkoxy or heteroaryl-C_{1-3}-alkoxy group, while the heteroaryl moiety is as hereinbefore defined, or~~

~~a tert.butyl ester is prepared by reacting with 2,2-dimethyl-ethene in the presence of an acid,~~

~~or~~

~~c) converting under suitable conditions a compound of the formula (VI) into a compound of the formula (I) in which R_e is defined as a carboxy group:~~



(VI) (I)

~~wherein~~

~~n and R_a to R_d are as defined in claim 10 and~~

~~R_e" denotes a group which can be converted into a carboxy group; and~~

~~for each of the above steps a-c,~~ optionally subsequently:

reducing under suitable reducing conditions a compound of the formula (I) thus obtained which contains a nitro group into a corresponding amino compound and/or

deprotecting under suitable conditions any protecting groups used during the reactions; and

isolating compounds of the formula I thus obtained by resolving into its stereoisomers and/or converting into the physiologically acceptable salts thereof.